THE

THESPIAN MONITOR,

AND

DRAMATICK MISCELLANY.

BY BARNABY BANGBAR, ESQ.

Careless of censure—nor too fond of fame,
Still pleas'd to praise—yet not afraid to blame,
Averse, alike, to flatter or offend. POPE.

Vol. I.....SATURDAY, Nov. 25, 1809.....No. I.

TO THE READER.

WITH the proposals for the publication of any periodical essay, time out of mind it has been customary, to issue a prospectus; by which is meant a description of the plan upon which a paper is to be conducted, the manner and the time of its appearance, and the objects which it is continually to embrace. But as in the publication of our proposals we were unavoidably led into a departure from this general rule, we shall now devote a part of our paper to the developement of our intended plan.

In our "critical remarks upon theatrical exhibition" we shall ever be attentive to the strictest rules of propriety. The unnecessary promises so frequently made and unpardonably broken, of fostering impartiality in our habits,

and banishing prejudice from our pages, we consider too unimportant and contemptible for repetition. Entirely unassisted by assurances, we trust to the proper acquittal of our duty, for a reputation of honest impartiality. Anxious, and no less determined to be found strictly attentive to the feelings and the interest of an actor, the advantages of an auditor, the amusement of a patron, and the firmness of our own character, as true and impartial criticks, we shall keep constantly in view the terms of our motto.

The deformities which nature may have bestowed upon the man; the imperfections which industry may have found insurmountable in the actor; and the innate deficiency of utterance which may be perceptible in the speaker, shall never become with us, the subject for ridicule, for the exercise of paltry witticism, or for the brandishing of our critick's sceptre over the misfortunes of a fellow creature. Nor shall the *sometimes* obtruder, malice, ever be employed to lessen in respect, to tarnish in reputation, to defraud of proper tribute, or to prevent from receiving deserved approbation; the worth, the talent, or the commendable exertion of the industrious and indefatigable Thespian. Thus much for our critical avocation.

In giving the "Biography of celebrated living actors," we shall be furnished with materials collected from their nearest inmates, their diurnal companions, or their most immediate friends; and in relating the adventures, the anecdotes or the eccentricities of those who have departed for another realm, we shall either ob-

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tain our matter from the memoranda which they may have left behind them, or from such sketches of biography as may have been already published.

For our "Thespian Intelligence, Green Room Adventure, and anecdotes of Foreign Theatricals," we shall rely upon indisputable authority, before we suffer their appearance in the Monitor.

For our "Selected Essays upon Tragedy, Comedy, and other of the stage departments" we shall be principally indebted to the best authors, the most celebrated annotators, and well established and reputed criticks. But for our "Dramatick Literature, original Essays, and concise Reviews, of such publications as have for their subject the discussion and illustration of the Drama," we promise to provide as much of original matter, as the time, the subject for remark, and the nature of the Essay will admit.

NEW-THEATRE.

The present theatrical campaign commenced on Monday evening with the celebrated Comedy of "A Cure for the Heart Ache." Considering the extreme inclemency of the weather, the house was *unexpectedly* crouded, but almost entirely with gentlemen, the recent flashing of a fashionable custom, preventing the appearance of ladies upon a first night. The Theatre has undergone a general repair, and re-

ceived many elegant improvements. The audience-part is very tastily and superbly decorated with a variety of hues; the boxes have been newly painted, with a cluster of flowers in the resemblance of a wreath, upon the front of each, the ground of white, and the mouldings of a stone colour; the interior is composed of yellow, mingled with occasional white and blue; and the pillars or supporters, which before were of plain gilding, have been transformed into perfect white, with a burnished Corinthian capital to each, and the laurel entwined around the body; the leaf and berry of which forming a gaiety of contrast with a new suit of drapery, dispose the mind to cheerfulness and mirth. The stage boxes, besides being fitted up in the manner of the others, have the addition of two large Mirrors or Pier-glasses, to each of which is attached a *single brass branch* for the reception of a candle, and not a large lustre as has been ill-naturedly reported; the Manager well knowing that the brilliancy of which those boxes are often the receptacle, will of itself "like a star i' th' darkest night, stick fiery off "indeed!" The exterior of the house has recently received upon the walls immediately above the representative figures of *Melpomene* and *Thalia*, the emblems and symbols of the scenic art, and those beneath the colonnade have received an additional coat of black and white, and a set of new lamps: and we expect that the broken windows in the various parts of the front and sides are to be newly glazed and painted.

Monday, Nov. 20th.

A CURE FOR THE HEART ACHE.

* Thomas Morton, Esq.

Sir Hubert Stanley,	Mr. M'Kenzie.
Vortex,	Mr. Francis.
Charles Stanley,	Mr. Cone.
Young Rapid,	Mr. Wood.
Old Rapid,	Mr. Warren.
Frank Oatland,	Mr. Jefferson.
Ellen Vortex,	Mrs. Seymour.
Miss Vortex,	Mrs. Francis.
Jesse Oatland,	Mrs. Wood.

This Comedy, which has once been licentiously condemned, under the appellation of a "Farce," was supported by its different characters, this night, with unusual spirit and success. —The *Vortex* of Francis was excessively "parliamentary;" the *Stanleys* perfectly characteristick, and the *Rapids* incomparably humourous. Warren was not negligent to the *taylor*, and seemed oftener than once to "*stick his needle in the proper place.*" Mr. Wood by changing the stage business, by his new costume in the part, by his swiftness of motion, and his quickness of delivery, so indispensably necessary to the character of *Young Rapid*, discovered many very

* In addition to the Biographical Sketches of the actors, it is our intention to narrate some account of the authors of the most celebrated Dramas, which may be represented during the week, under our notice. With this number we give Thomas Morton, Esq'rs. Biography.

evident proofs of his rapid improvement. M'Kenzie's *Sir Hubert Stanley* was finely mingled with severe sensation. The ardent feelings of the father, the tender sympathy of the humane landlord, and the pious sufferings of unwelcome grief, received that high degree of justice and excellent execution which Mr. M'Kenzie can at all times command.

Charles Stanley was no less the deserving object of our admiration than his father. Mr. Cone acquited himself judiciously: he has commenced his season in such a manner as if continued, must command success.

The *Frank Oatland* of Jefferson was as excellent as has ever been witnessed upon this stage, and perhaps upon any other. The scenes with his father, with *Jesse*, *Young Rapid* and *Stanley*, were truly interesting, and extremely well executed; but that with *Mr. Vortex*, and the purse, was inimitably great. The different emotions of honesty and tempted fear, were finely pourtrayed in all his features and in every motion, and the whole representation of the part surpassed what we have seen in him before; and commanded the most deserved applause.

Mrs. Wood's *Jesse* was lovely, interesting, and represented with excellent effect. Her *Mary Thornberry*, *Cicely Homespun*, and the present part will never be exceeded. Her gesture is easy, graceful, and elegant; her stage walk dignified and natural; and her command of countenance highly appropriate.

Mrs. Francis and Mrs. Seymour received their tribute of applause, and some scenes of Miss *Vortex* were "uncommon fine," as is said by her author.

OF AGE TO-MORROW.

Anonymous.

Baron Willinghœrst,	Mr. Jefferson.
Piffleberg,	Mr. Francis.
Molkus,	Mr. Blissett.
Lady Von Brumbach,	Mrs. Francis.
Maria,	Mrs. Wilmot.

This afterpiece contains several laughable and humourous mistakes. *Willinghœrst* evinces sufficient activity, and causes general mirth and good humour. Francis is a new Piffleberg, in the room of Mr. Bray, and his style of courting equally new. Lady Brumbach was rather negligent in exhibiting her graces, and if recollection fail us not, was not so appropriately attired as heretofore. The Songs of *Maria* were given with considerable effect, much force, and characteristick gesture; excited an infinite degree of pleasure; and were favored with universal approbation. "Nobody coming to marry me," although familiar to the public ear, was long and loudly applauded.

Wednesday, Nov. 22d.

PIZARRO;

Or the Spaniards in Peru.

(Kotzebue), Translator R. B. Sheridan.

Pizarro,	Mr. M'Kenzie.
Alonzo,	Mr. Cone.
Las Casas,	Mr. Warren.
Rolla,	Mr. Wood.
Elvira,	Mrs. Barret.
Cora,	Mrs. Wood.

Pizarro's haughtiness, true dignity of deportment, and irritable haste to conquer, met a proper and an able representative in M'Kenzie, whose exertion on this night succeeded so far as to make it the best representation he ever gave it. Cone's *Alonzo* was judicious and well uttered: the scene with *Pizarro* and *Elvira*, was never yet surpassed upon this stage: we recognized much of Mr. Cain. A little less monotony might please the "million" better. *Las Casas* was reverendly commanding; and has acquired more strength, as well as more harmony of voice, than heretofore. Mrs. Barrett's *Elvira*, with all its majesty of strut, and upright deportment, was drawled with too lingering an emphasis to be either natural or pleasing, though some of the attitudes which the different situations of *Elvira* required, were extremely fine. *Rolla* has received more commanding utterance, and much additional lustre in the acting, but we think rather too much in the dressing. Peruvians should

be plain. The new *business* (to speak technically) of seizing *Pizarro* at the couch and bringing him down the stage, together with the posture of the rival warriors, was finely finished. It adds considerably to the beauty and effect of the whole scene, and reflects much credit upon the judgment of Mr. Wood.

From the representation of *Cora*, we never received greater delight, nor felt ourselves so peculiarly interested. The part was perfect, as with Mrs. Wood it ever has been, and was in better costume than we have often seen it.

The gentleman who personated *Valverde* is deserving of every degree of applause: the delivery of his address to *Elvira* at the couch, was audibly and forcibly repeated, the emphatick sentences sufficiently marked, and the whole utterance such as convinces us he may yet, with the assistance of industry and application, become a favorite with the audience, and an useful and admired actor; when we discover the smallest degree of talent in any individual of the company, we shall use our endeavours to call it forth, and to ensure its future success and admiration. Mr. Miller may be said to have surpassed himself.

The *Priest of the Sun* was not in the truest harmony: the notes of the first singer of our theatre require more attention, more sweetness, and more effect than Mr. Jacobs can ever give them.

REVIEW; OR WAGS OF WINDSOR.

Coleman the Younger.

Caleb Quotem,	Mr. Jefferson.
Looney M'Twoulter,	Mr. Hardinge.
John Lump,	Mr. Wilmot.
Deputy Bull,	Mr. Francis.

The Review brought before us again, after a four years absence, Mr. Hardinge in the character of *Looney*. For such parts as are marked with Irish dialect, and with blustering humour, we wish no better representative. He was received with several rounds of loud applause, and acquitted himself in his former excellent manner. His songs were all encor'd, his notes were fine, "The list'ning crowd admired the lofty strain!"

Mr. Bray's departure from the theatre, has given several parts to Mr. Wilmot, as we suspect from his appearing in *John Lump*, to which he gave all the energy, the simplicity, spirit and dialect which Yorkshire *Lump* requires—He succeeds an admirable actor in the Yorkshire characters, and therefore must struggle hard to obtain applause. *Deputy Bull* was more than commonly spirited: we cannot however sanction the practice of pilfering the jokes from another part.

BIOGRAPHY.

The Biography of Mrs. JONES, having been first in our possession, and her departure from this most troubled stage, in the midst of great

celebrity, acquired by her continual exertion, having been attended with peculiar circumstances, and as we are are assured that the smallest account of an actress who has by turns fascinated and gratified a Philadelphia audience, will ever be perused with pleasure by them, we have resolved on its appearance here.

Mrs. Jones was one of three daughters of a respectable physician in London, of the name of Granger, who dying while she was young, left her in the care of her grandmother, Mrs. Booth, of Drury Lane. His circumstances at his death not being flourishing, the grandmother took his daughter under her own care, and introduced her at an early age, as a singer at the theatre where she was herself engaged She is said to have played several musical parts with success, but we have seen no publick mention of her performances. About nine years since, she married Mr. Jones, comedian, and embarked for America ; her first engagement was at Philadelphia, where she and her husband played three seasons. Her vocal powers commanded a high degree of approbation here ; and her standing was respectable, from the ackno ledged correctness of her conduct as a wife and a mother. She did not, nevertheless, receive that degree of patronage at her benefits to which she had so fair a claim, which was the chief reason of her abandoning this theatre. Thence she went to Boston, where her talents were duly appreciated, under the management of Mr. Powell : but domestick disquiet entered their dwelling, which ended in her husbands leaving her and her four children and accepting an engagement at

Charleston, where he performed one season, and where he died in August 1806. Mrs. Jones, during the season she played in New-York, unfolded more talent, acquired more professional reputation, and was at all times a greater favourite with the box, pit, and gallery, than the citizens of that place ever witnessed. Had she not been prematurely snatched away, expectation had formed the highest anticipation of her future prospects.

Thomas Morton, Dramatist,

Was born in the County of Durham.—His father died when he was very young, and the care of his education and fortune devolved upon his uncle, Mr. Maddison, who sent him to Soho Square Academy, where he was a contemporary performer in the private plays of that seminary, with Mr. Holman. He became afterwards a member of Lincoln's Inn. His dramatick works are "Columbus; or the World Discovered," an historical drama, acted at Covent Garden, 1792. Mr. Thelwall, then a famous political lecturer, laid claim to this piece. He had sent an opera nine months before, to Mr. Harris, on the same subject, which was rejected, and he complained that several incidents and characters in it were similar to those of "Columbus." But the fact is, both pieces were chiefly taken from Marmontel, and consequently a similitude was unavoidable. "The Children in the Wood," musical entertainment acted at the Haymarket, 1793; "Zorin-

ski," musical drama, do. 1795. "The Way to get Married," comedy, acted at Covent Garden, 1796; "A Cure for the Heart Ache," do. 1797; "Secrets worth Knowing," do. 1798; "Speed the Plough," do. 1799; "The Blind Girl," opera, do. 1800. "Town and Country," do. 1804.

THESPIAN INTELLIGENCE.

Master PYANE, the celebrated prodigy, has performed ten nights at Baltimore. His engagement for six nights commenced on Friday, Oct. 20th, with Young Norval, after which he played successively, Rolla, Hamlet, Frederick Friburg, (Lovers' Vows) Octavian, and Romeo. On the night of the 30th of October, he played Tancred, for his own benefit, and on November the 8th was re-engaged for three nights, when he personated Selim, Zaphna, and Hamlet, again.

Mr. Bray and Wife have left this theatre, and accepted an engagement in the Charleston company, now playing at Richmond.

Mr. Mills and wife are still at Boston.

Mrs. Green is now in the Richmond theatre, where her husband is the acting manager.

The only transatlantick children of Thespis, recently arrived in this country, are Mrs. Mason, Mr. Foster, and Mr. Simpson, all of whom are at New-York.

Mr. Cooper, it is said, is to perform a limited number of nights in each of the theatres in the United States, during the following season, after which he retires from the stage.

It is whispered, that the length of time between the acts in this theatre is to be greatly diminished: had this arrangement taken place, previous to the performance of Pizarro, it would have been to the convenience of the audience.

The Philadelphia Company has received no addition of new actors, except a Mr. West; Mr. Hardinge having been of this theatre before.

ON THE ENGLISH STAGE.

From Pratt's Gleanings in England.

THE Stage ought to be considered as the great scene of mingled amusement and instruction of the people in general, and of the mirth and seriousness, morality and emulative talent of the nation in particular. Perhaps the first view which is taken of the stage by a young and unpractised person, is amongst the warmest and strongest facinations that can bind the human imagination. It held mine for some years in chains of such magick, that the impressions, they wrought into my very heart, are never to be worn out. I magnified every magick hero and heroine into the god and goddess of that heart's idolatry. I could detail the sort of homage I paid to the actress whom I had first seen perform the part of Imogen, on the London boards: I detested the insidious queen, who separated her from Posthumus, so violently, that I could have almost sprung upon her across the orchestra, and

torn the crown from her head; and, as for the 'yellow Jachimo' I could have nailed him down in his pretended travelling trunk. But how fondly did I follow the fair fugitive in her disguise! how did my affections attend her to Milford Haven! how twine themselves about the faithful Pisanio—how share in the scorn of the Princess over the insolent Cloten, mourn over the flowery bier of Fidele, and triumph in the happy re-union of the lovers!

Nor was the devotion of my feelings offered only to the great poet, or to the player who represented one of his most amiable characters. No, my friend, in this glowing season of ignorance and youth, I could scarcely be persuaded that there was any thing like fiction in any part of the delight I received. So intensely was my fancy kindled, and my feelings exerted, I almost annihilated the supreme bard himself, and supposed all that I had heard or saw the spontaneous effusion of a real Imogen; and that Imogen the very lady who performed the part. A proof of this might be gathered from my charm continuing after she had resumed her character. No soaner had the curtain dropt, than, unable to bear the thoughts of chasing away the virtuous grief or joy of my heart, by the burlesque, or the coarse humour of a farce, I left the theatre, and waited at the stage door for a sight of my Imogen returning home. I found out her sedan, and stuck as close to it as one of the chairmen, heedless of a cold and inclement night. This princess of my imagination, in the majestick form of Mrs. YATES, at last came forth, and though she was completely muffled up, tucked herself into her

chair, and was bobbed off at a slow trot, just like a common mortal, I converted every circumstance to her honour. In fancy's eye I still saw her an illumined object, through all the smoke of streets, blink of the lamps, and the pelting of the rain; and when the fellows, who had the honour to carry her, set down their precious load, at her well-remembered apartments, in King-street, Covent Garden—which I have never passed since, without either smiling or sighing at the circumstances—never, my friend—Oh never shall I forget the bounding sensation with which I saw my paragon quit her sedan, order her chairmen at ten the next morning, to a rehearsal, and ascend to her apartments. And although the passage to those, had nothing to distinguish them from a thousand others, which, at that period, more inferiour beings might have had for about a guinea and a half per week, they maintained their importance in my imagination, and their dignity in my feeling, not only during that night, while I ruminated upon them in my own rooms, but the whole of this my first excursion to London.

The British theatre has always had virtues as well as talents, and never, perhaps, more of the former, in the aggregate, than at the present day. Of the latter, we have less to complain than of their application; but then, again, it should be remembered, whoever it was that has introduced the false and vicious taste, which has been before commented upon, the publick deserve to share the blame, for giving it their suffrage, in the first instance, and still more for continuing to applaud it in the second. They are well aware

of the truth of Johnson's poetical remark, that

"Those who live to please must please to live,"

and they have but to be pleased with natural character and genuine wit or pathos, and to shew their disrelish of inflated buffoonery, and over-strained caricature, to redeem the comick, and reform the tragick Muses of the country, from their long and ignominious degradation.

I cannot take leave of the English stage, without saying a few words on what is technically called *dramatick damnation*. Upon this subject I have long meditated, and I have seen nothing to alter my sentiments, but every thing to confirm them. Those who have attended theatres, very well know, that they contain, on the first night of almost every new performance, a countless variety of causes, many of them trfling in themselves, but the least of sufficient importance, to destroy the hopes of the man who has certainly intended, and to the best of his power, attempted, publick amusement. The play-house, like the grave, brings friends and enemies together, and both are, as in the grave, promiscuously placed by the side of one another: yet, unlike the tomb in one respect, they assemble in the theatre, not to lose the passions of nature, not to drop the asperities of the heart, or forget they ever had a foe, nor yet "to cease from troubling, and be at peace;" but every man comes armed, either with the terrors of prejudice, or the less hostile (though frequently not less dangerous) weapons of prepossession: an injudicious friend being the most *determined* enemy whom any man, and particularly a dramatick writer, hath to encoun-

ter. Supposing the friends and enemies are equal as to numbers, they are always unequal as to force; it being settled by stage experience, that one hiss can destroy the effect of a thousand plaudits. Dramatick success depends much also on the immediate temper of an audience; their dispositions to be pleased or displeased at the time; their opinion of an authour's politicks; his former good or bad luck; his former lustre, or his present obscurity. If he come forth *avowed*, any one may take aim at his expectations for a very trifling expense; the malicious opportunity which has, perhrps, been watched for by persons to whom he is obnoxious (and watched too with all the vigilance of implacability) at last offers itself, and is not to be neglected. "Envy, malice, and uncharitableness" behold, at length, their object a fair mark before them; and even if an authour escape these, other annoyers are in the rear. If, on the contrary, a writer folds up his name in mystery, there are those who think it right to prevent the multiplication of dramatick authours, and wishing themselves to keep, as it is called, *possession of both houses*, crush ambitious genius in its bud, and, by checking its first aspirings, impede its progress, or deter from further exertion. To a right mind, praise is the nurse of excellence, and by withholding this, in due season, the world has probably lost many a great and valuable acquisition; a truth that will hold good though all the arts and sciences, and indeed through life: and it it is certain that the want of generous, well-timed encouragement has done even more injury than the intoxication of applause.